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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

METHOD AND SYSTEM FOR MANAGING A DISTRIBUTED TRUST PATH  
LOCATOR FOR PUBLIC KEY CERTIFICATES RELATING TO THE TRUST  
5 PATH OF AN X.509 ATTRIBUTE CERTIFICATE

A method and a system is presented for managing attribute certificates. An extension within an attribute certificate, called a distributed trust path locator, 10 allows an attribute certificate to be physically disassociated from its supporting public key certificates while remaining logically associated with its supporting public key certificates. The user's attribute certificate and its supporting PKCs allows any server 15 using an attribute certificate to locate and retrieve the PKC of the user and of the AC-issuing authority. The user is not required to communicate his/her PKC to a target service. In addition, configuring the target service to accept attribute certificates does not require 20 the deployment of a PKC for every AC-issuing authority.